



NEBRASKA BOBCAT TAGGING RESULTS 2008/2009 SEASON

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Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
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Season:

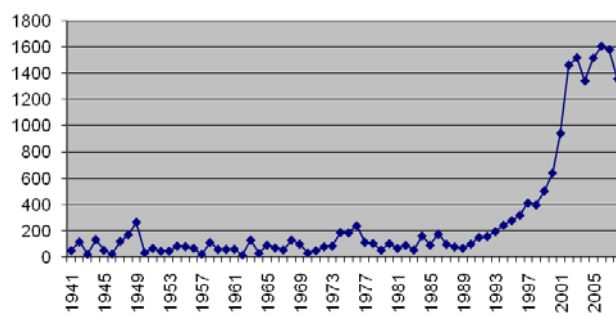
The 2008/2009 bobcat season opened on December 1, 2008 and closed on February 28, 2009. In 2002, the season ending had been extended from February 15 to the last day in February.

Bobcats:

A total of 1,358 bobcats were tagged during the 2008/2009 season (compared with 1,579 in 2007/2008). Of these, trappers and hunters harvested 1,327 bobcats, 31 bobcats were killed by vehicles. Forty-eight percent of bobcats with known gender harvested during the 2008/2009 season were females.

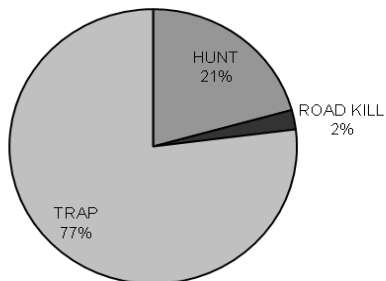
With 221 fewer bobcats than the previous season's record harvest, this is the sixth highest harvest on record and the seventh consecutive harvest total over 1,300 since the dramatic rise in the 1990's.

Bobcat Harvest 1941 to 2008/2009

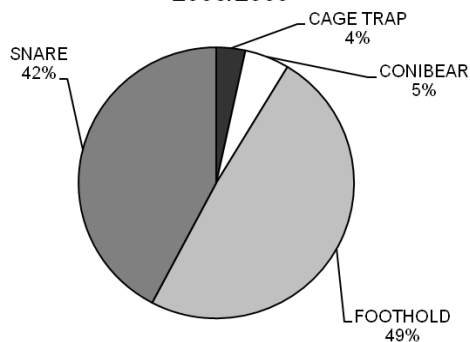


Of bobcats with known date of take, 76 (6%) were taken during the recently extended season (February 16 through February 28).

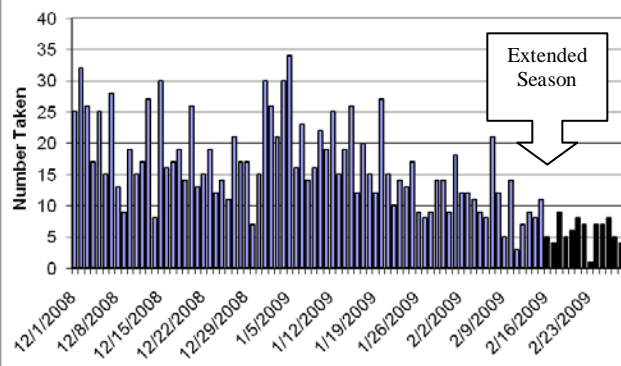
Bobcat Harvest and Method of Take 2008/2009



Bobcat Take by Type of Trap 2008/2009

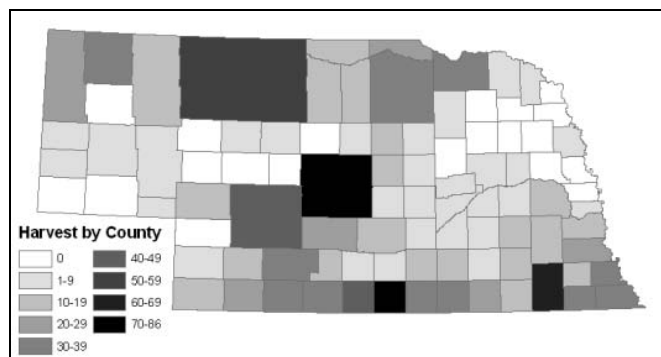


Bobcat Take by Date 2008/2009



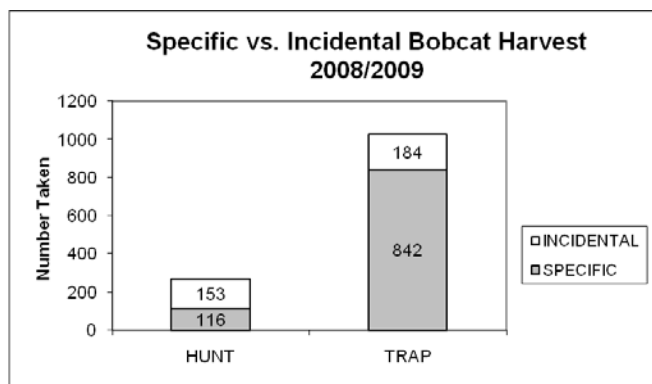
Both the absolute number of bobcats harvested and the bobcat harvest density per square mile were highest in the southeastern and south-central counties of the state, followed by the central and north-central region. The three counties with the highest harvest densities were Franklin (14 bobcats per 100 miles²), Nemaha (8 bobcats per

100 miles²) and Harlan (8 bobcats per 100 miles²). The three counties with the highest total bobcat harvest were Custer (86), Franklin (82) and Gage (67).



Harvesters:

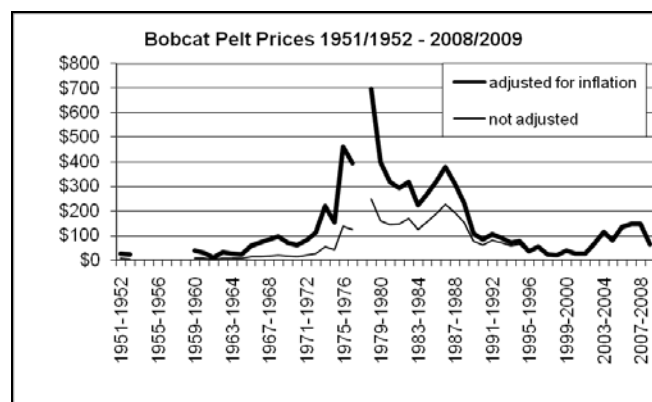
Trappers harvested more bobcats than hunters did (1046 vs. 281), and trappers also indicated a greater proportion of bobcats taken specifically. 3.9 times as many bobcats were harvested by trapping as by hunting. The highest number of bobcats taken by one individual was 25 (all trapped).



Pelts:

Preliminary data from the 2008/2009 fur buyer survey indicate that the average price for bobcat pelts paid by fur buyers in Nebraska was \$66.03. This represents a 55% decrease compared with an average of \$145.62 in 2007/2008. Bobcat pelts remain the most valuable wild fur harvested in Nebraska. Individual pelt prices are highly variable due to differences in pelt quality and stages of processing at sale. According to fur

buyers and harvesters, bobcat pelts are prime from December 1 through the end of the season.



Conclusion:

The high harvest numbers over the past decade may be attributed to the establishment and proliferation of CRP, high prey densities, declining coyote densities (possibly due to mange) and thus reduced competition, and increasing interest in bobcats by harvesters. Historically, bobcat pelts have been one of the most valuable of Nebraska's wild pelts, the recent increase in bobcat pelt prices and good weather conditions this season may have caused an increase in harvest participation and harvest effort. The general trend of high harvest numbers are a result of the growing effort and skill level of harvesters, as well as higher population densities and range expansion. While at this time there is no indication that the harvest negatively impacts bobcat populations in Nebraska, a shortening of the season and/or the implementation of bag limits should be considered if, despite high harvest participation and high pelt prices, a substantial and persistent drop in total harvest occurs in coming years.

Special thanks to all NGPC staff that collected harvest data, tagged bobcats, and enforced regulations during the 2008/2009 bobcat season. Harvest monitoring and status assessment would not be possible without your help. Thanks also to harvesters and fur buyers for providing data used in this analysis.